

THINGS TO DO > RESTAURANTS FOOD AND DRINK • Review

## Best thing I ate: Critic Brad A. Johnson's 20 best dishes of 2020

How it started versus how it's going: The most extraordinary bites of a tumultuous year.

### 1. Coconut brioche French toast at Marché Moderne

My most exciting meal of the year came in March just a few days before the first round of shutdowns. It was weekend brunch at [Marché Moderne](https://www.marchemoderne.net), and almost anything I ate that day could have ranked number one on this list: the chocolate hazelnut croissant, the crab parfait with tomato gelée, the potato crisp with smoked salmon and caviar, the baked eggs with braised pork belly... But then there was that huge square hunk of brioche cooked like French toast and served with creme anglaise, coconut gelato and macadamia nougatine. We should have called an end to 2020 right then because it was going to be downhill from there no matter what. 7862 E. Pacific Coast Highway, Newport Beach, 714-434-7900, [marchemoderne.net](https://www.marchemoderne.net)



Coconut brioche French toast at Marché Moderne in Crystal Cove (Photo by Brad A. Johnson, Orange County Register/SCNG)